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Letter dated 27 June 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to inform you of the following:

During the daylight hours of 13 and 14 June 2001, thick columns of smoke were seen deep inside the occupied Shab'a farmlands ascending from fires that had been deliberately set to extensive tracts of woodland and fruit trees by Israeli occupation forces.

On another day, occupation forces deliberately set fire to the dry grass between the Abbad position and the adjacent Margaliyot settlement. The smoke from this fire was also seen rising from the slope to the east of the position and then spreading into Lebanese territory. The Israeli soldiers remained at the position watching the fire spread over the area in question with indifference and did not intervene.

The fires that have already broken out and those that are bound to occur in the future, especially when it becomes hotter, are deliberately set by the occupation forces. This is particularly evident from the fact that ever since their occupation first began they have persistently been setting fire to the dry grass, fruit trees and woodlands that surround their military positions and obstruct their field of view so that they can use the night-vision equipment they have deployed in the occupied Shab'a farmlands and along the Lebanese border for the alleged purpose of preventing infiltration.

If they are repeated, such practices will destroy the woodlands and forested areas in the occupied Shab'a farmlands and extensive green areas adjacent to the border that represent for Lebanon a major resource that cannot be relinquished on the flimsy pretexts advanced by the occupation.

Lebanon asks you to make the necessary endeavours with the Israeli side in order to oblige it to take the measures required to prevent fires from spreading and to use all possible means to control them when they break out in the areas it is occupying, given that these wooded tracts and green areas represent a major ecological resource for Lebanon.

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I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 40, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sélim **Tadmoury**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative